

Flowers of the Spirit

Ella A. Gilman

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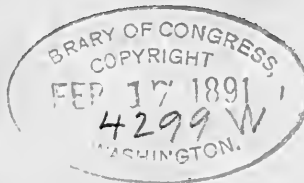
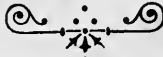


# FLOWERS OF THE SPIRIT

BY  
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"BACHELOR BEN," "MAIDEN RACHEL,"  
"OUT OF THE SHADOWS," ETC.



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*TO MY MOTHER.*





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## WIND-FLOWERS.

O graves of my dead and living!  
O frosts in my soul as the clime!  
Impatient list I for the voice  
Of the Northland's slow springtime,—  
The heart's long-lost springtime.

Lo! purple flowerets, breathing  
Faint fragrance in my room,  
Chide soft this fond May morning  
My mind's distrustful gloom,—  
Its almost godless gloom.

The downy-nested petals  
Swift to my lips I press,  
The hopes of fourscore springtimes  
Throb in the mute caress,—  
The same divine caress.

Far up the stony hillside,  
    'Mid snow-drifts, weeping, dying,  
They grew in gentle triumph,  
    While mortals sat a-sighing,—  
    All doubt-chilled, sat a-sighing.

O graves of my dead and living!  
    O warmth in my soul as the clime!  
List I no more for the coming  
    Of the sweet and true springtime,—  
    The heart's delayed springtime.

## FLOWERS OF THE SPIRIT.

O sister of sweet Charity,  
I bend me low and list to thee.  
Thy dying lips may yet confess  
The secret of unworldliness.  
Thy face is wreathed in smiles serene,  
As o'er thy couch I fondly lean  
To hear thee in soft accents speak.  
Wilt thou not tell me where to seek  
Such grace as thine? I fain would know  
What lends thy death this steady glow  
Of cheerfulness. With waning breath  
Thou answerest—"On bed of death,  
O Holy Mother, give me voice  
To tell this child why I rejoice  
At my last hour. Oh, let me tell  
What incense pure, ineffable,  
Steals o'er my soul, that when I die  
My holy robe of Charity

May fall upon her gentle form.  
Oh, shield her ever from the storm  
Of selfish interests which assail  
The human heart! Let her not quail  
Before the world, but braver be  
For having heard these words from me.

“Every hopeful smile I’ve given  
The despondent and sin-riven;  
Every tear I thought was lost  
On lives wrecked and tempest-tossed;  
Every kind word I have spoken,  
To the weary and heart-broken;  
Every generous act committed;  
E’en the noble thought that flitted  
O’er my soul’s deep silentness,  
Seeming to be meaningless;  
Every thrill of sympathy,—  
Now in living flower I see.

Child! thou lovest flowers, too!  
Let thy life, like sun and dew,

Nourish saintly germs that lie  
Waiting tender ministry.  
Thou shalt have them in their beauty,  
Flowers of love and flowers of duty;  
Blossoms rare, unfolding ever,—  
Thou shalt be without them never.  
Though thy days pass noiselessly,  
Secret growths there yet may be,  
That, long hid from human eyes,  
Thou, at last, in rapt surprise  
May see matured, and perfected  
In light and warmth by thy life shed.  
Fadeless flowers may be thine!  
Born of thoughts and deeds divine.

IN THE GARDEN.

In the garden slowly strolling  
One bright morn;  
With my eyes downcast and tearful,  
Heart forlorn;  
Saw I creeping out to meet me  
A fresh flower,  
Hidden underneath the pavement  
Till that hour.  
Just one blossom of deep purple  
Lifting up,  
In a tender thirst for dewdrops,  
Its frail cup.  
Knelt I there while stole upon me  
Memories slow,  
Of a sainted mother's planting  
Years ago  
Morning-glory seeds, and watching  
All in vain



For their sprouting and their blooming.  
Twice again,  
At the dawn of day, I wandered  
There to greet,  
As it trembling lay in beauty  
Near my feet,  
That sweet blossom, whose communion  
Cheered my heart;  
Bidding all my soulful fancies  
Ne'er depart.  
On the third morn, disappointed  
And depressed,  
That no flower had bloomed responsive  
To my quest,  
For some token of her presence  
Lone I wept,  
As I stood in silent sorrow,  
Swiftly crept  
To my side the white-robed figure  
Of a child,  
Holding up in glee the flower  
That had smiled

Early on its sunny pathway.

Ah, the gain!

Bent I low and kissed her forehead.

Fled my pain

At the thought that she, who planted

Long ago

Morning-glories, would be happy

Could she know

That one blossom's simple mission

Was to take

Pleasure to a little stranger

For her sake.

## THE CYCLAMEN.

Thou liftest high thy form among thy mates,  
And shyly bend'st thy head as violets do.  
And oft I liken thee to one I know,  
Who is both meekly strong and coyly true.  
Among them all there is no maid who seems  
So far removed, yet sways so near as she  
In her responsiveness; ne'er courting love  
With subtle arts; by nature bred to be  
Bravest in soul, when timidest in air.  
Self-poised in regal pride—an humble queen.  
An Artemis in grace and graciousness;  
Love-conscious, blushing under glances keen.  
Inviting Cyclamen, and smiling girl,  
Bloom on! from flower-depths thy candid eyes  
Awake but chaste desire. I dare be fond—  
Thou art so maiden-pure and woman-wise.

## LITTLE BLUE SHOES.

Two little shoes of worsted blue,  
With satin ribbons woven through  
The pretty tops, and slowly tied  
By trembling hands that could not hide  
Their owner's joy, as, standing there,  
She proudly held aloft the pair.  
Two tiny shoes of azure blue  
Were shown to me—but not to you.

She softly spoke. What matchless grace  
Lighted her sweet Madonna face!  
In smiling lips and cheeks aglow  
I saw no fear of future woe.  
Trust deepened in her tender eyes;  
She leaned in meditative guise,  
Touching those dots of turquoise hue;  
Whispering low—but not to you.

She whispers now; I yet can see  
Her feature's gentle mystery.  
She smiles and beckons. Fancy teems  
With fairy etchings, faint as dreams,  
But dimly true within my thought,  
As I surveyed the sweet work, wrought  
In hours transcendent,—shapes in blue,  
Long hid from me,—still hid from you.

Like little ships, serene and still,  
They wait for passengers to fill  
Their cosy cabins, warm and neat,  
Crocheted to shelter baby-feet.  
In many ports of love and cheer,  
Such harbingers of life appear.  
From pictures myriad I choose—  
A woman showing tiny shoes.

For little shoes will ever wait  
The little feet that kindly fate  
Brings to the hallowed harbor fair  
Of father's kiss and mother's care.

The summer comes ; the summer goes ;  
But scenes like this it ne'er outgrows,—  
Queer little shoes so soft and blue,  
Sometime—sometime, you'll see them too.

AH ME! THOUGH FREE.

If I can only show thee, dear,  
The truth my soul perceives  
(Since losing me so grieves),  
If I can banish all thy fear,  
And thou canst to thy God draw near,  
Without those superstitions drear,  
How happy we may be!  
Ah me!  
How free  
And happy we may be.

If I can break the ties that hold  
Thee to thy dim faith, dear,  
And show thee mine so clear!  
If now, as we are growing old,  
We share the blessings manifold  
Of liberty, by Christ foretold,  
How happy may we be.  
Ah me!  
How free  
And happy may we be.

Alas ! I cannot show thee, dear,  
The truth my soul perceives  
(Nor tell thee how it grieves).

Thou wilt not hear my words. Dost fear,  
Lest, losing some delusions drear,  
Thou'lt find that my belief can cheer,  
And thine is heresy?

Ah me!

How free

Ought every mind to be.

And so our souls must part for aye;  
Each loyal to the wraith  
Of reason and of faith.

And so we sit and think and sigh,  
And so the weary years go by,  
And still both wonder vaguely why  
We cannot happy be.

Ah me!

Though free,

We cannot happy be.



## ARBUTUS.

The sweet significance of certain flowers  
Which some botanic scholar has discerned  
I care nought for; each bud of varying hues  
Makes its own dialect. And since I've learned  
Of the unending genesis of Love—  
I hold that every flower has message new,  
And breathes a secret forth in silentness  
To one whose heart is nature-tuned. Thou'rt  
true!

The proof lies in the Arbutus sent me  
'Mid these bleak haunts, from thy far mountain  
home;

It breathes this Easter morn thy constancy.

LET ME THINK THOU LOVEST ME.

Let me think thou lovest me,

Since the thought doth fill

(Ever fill)

All my being with delight

And my pulses thrill

(Quickly thrill).

Let me think the carping world

Holds for thee no one

(Favored one).

Half so dear as I, whose faults

Thou wilt oft condone

(Swift condone).

O, how sweet it is to muse

On thy gentleness

(Gentleness);

Thy fond smile; thy gracious mien,

And thy soft caress,

(Rare caress).

Though 'tis all delusion's snare

I would not be free,

(Not be free).

Let me dream while life doth last

That thou lovest me,

(Lov'st but me.)

## IN THE FULNESS OF TIME.

Fate's store holds happiness as well as woe,  
And when you question her you cannot know  
How kind the answer is, how wise, how true,  
Which slumbers dormant in her mind for you.  
So let there be calm hope-days in your life;  
Full of divine content, devoid of strife;  
Hours when your inner, spiritual eye  
Dwells on the law of final unity.  
Ah, heart, believe it—you will have your own!  
Fateful Nemesis will not always frown,—  
Smiling she yet will bring you what is fit,  
Though now the space between seems infinite.  
That which belongs to you will surely come,  
And in your waiting soul find its true home.  
That which great Zeus withholds a curse would be;  
Seek not to aid all-powerful destiny.  
Oh, be not faithless, though the coffin-lid  
Of fate your living as your dead hath hid;

Moan not in loneliness and grief and pain,  
For surely you shall find your own again.  
God planneth for your good, not to your harm—  
There is no cause for doubt, distrust, alarm,  
Though dim the dawn of peace, let faith sublime  
Unfold in the full, noonday light of time.

## IRMA.

Forget it all—poor aching heart.  
The sense's peace, the spirit's smart.  
Lift thy proud head, bowed down to-day,  
With guilt thou fearest to betray.  
Measure no more the light, the shade,  
The gladness and the gloom it made.  
For none can solve the riddle—life.  
Thine Irma's love, thine her vain strife.  
Like her, thou'rt dwelling on the height  
Alone, remote from human sight.  
When men do think they see thee here  
Far off art thou, seeming so near,—  
Never so sweet and near as now,  
With wakened sense and hidden brow;  
With anguished eyes that half reveal  
The secret thou would'st fain conceal.  
Like Irma thou hast peace within;  
For self-condoned, if it were sin,

Is cause of exile. God's green hills  
Are reached but through subverted ills.  
Forget it all—strong, gentle maid,  
Who met thy King. Be not afraid!  
The Friend of Magdalen will be  
Thine too. From morbid memories flee.  
Come back, O Irma, to thy home;  
No longer on the sad hills roam.  
The name writ on thy forehead white  
Has faded in thy soul's pure light.

## WITHIN THE SOUL.

O struggling heart and clouded soul,  
Whisper to me the final goal  
Of all thy hopes ! Is it to stand  
On some high point of Fame's fair land,  
To look, with pride of self-content,  
On the low plane of lives still spent  
In vain attempts to rise above  
Their harder lot? Full well we love  
The summit air of praise deserved,  
But millions strive who are not nerved  
To lofty courage by applause.  
Canst thou, then, see some righteous cause  
Why thou shouldst be exempt from ills  
That others suffer? Sorrow kills  
Only the weak. The brave endure,  
And find for every woe a cure  
In patient prayer and active faith.  
Be not dismayed ! For only death



Can check the onward steps of those  
Who strive for heights of calm repose  
Within the soul. And we do hope  
That, far beyond our earthly scope,  
Lie hills of peace that Life conceals;  
Transfigured mounts that Death reveals;  
Oh, learn to know the just decree  
Of Nature and of Destiny;  
And though they hold thee long in thrall  
Climb heavenward in spite of all!

## SINCE MY LETTER.

And is there, then, no finer, softer speech,  
More swift than word of lip, or line of pen,  
By which the language of our souls can reach  
Beyond our being's scope, or sense's ken?

No tidings since my letter, love? Oh, lend  
Your spirit's ear, and the heart's guerdon fleet  
Which I, in voiceless feeling, hourly send,  
Thus listening in raptured silence greet.

No token since the freighted envelope  
Winged its long way to eager, waiting hands,  
Has gone to strengthen your too-timid hope,  
And prove my constancy in distant lands.  
But trust me, O my own! your fears are vain!  
Of my life's loyalty you are possessed.  
Think not (though I should never write again),  
That love has lost its ardor since confessed.

## PINK ROSES.

O sweet little girl in the pink gingham dress,  
Who brought me a cluster of roses to-day,  
Just hear what the gift and the giver express,—  
My thoughts they've entangled—oh, which went  
away?

Yourself or a bud? I was dreaming, I guess.

For flowers and donor both seem to be here!  
Oh, is it not strange, little girl clad in pink,  
That roses can talk to me? One nodded "Dear."  
They're all making love to me—what do you  
think?

Some murmur "I love you," and some say "Good  
cheer."

"I think of you fondly;" "I like you indeed,"  
Says one with pale petals, so like your soft cheek.  
I open a book, but they'll not let me read.

Their fragrance pursues me—in your voice they  
speak,

“I love you, I love you; my message pray heed.”

And one rivals you, dear, so fresh and so fair,  
Pink-robed little rosebud, with shy, beaming  
glance.

It says what your eyes said, as standing just there  
You lifted and dropped them in mute eloquence,—  
Dropped also the roses in charming despair.

I know now, 'twas not you, my dear little maid,  
Rose-flushing and toying with those amber beads  
As you stood looking down. Your spirit has  
stayed!

Your love and your cheer, that my life sadly needs,  
Will linger long after the pink roses fade.

## WAIT.

[SUGGESTED BY JOHN BURROUGHS'S "WAITING."]

Why make such haste? Why scorn delay?  
Of no avail thy eager pace.

Serenely work, and watch and pray,  
For what is thine shall find its place.

The wind may drive thy bark astray;  
Drifting afar thou now may'st be;  
Sleeping or waking, night and day,  
The shore thou seekest waits for thee.

Why rush, and call, and weep, and chide?  
Ships go and come across the sea;  
Mayhap, as thou dost hopeless bide,  
One, treasure-laden, sails to thee.

The clover, nodding in the wind,  
E'en now is plighted to the bee—  
Sigh not, O lover! thou art blind—  
If she is thine, she'll wait for thee.

The stars must find their place—the sky;  
The rivers reach their home—the sea;  
“Nor time, nor space, nor deep, nor high”  
Can keep thine own away from thee.

## IN COMING DAYS.

Feast thou thine eyes on waters calm and still,  
    On wooded shores afar of deepest green ;  
On verdant lawns that slope from yonder hill  
    So softly mirrored in blue depths serene.

White sails are furled ; gay little pleasure-boats  
    Move slowly here and there ; beyond the bay  
Where bulrush stands and water-lily floats  
    Are fields of yellow grain and domes of hay.

It is a peaceful scene ; one gladsome thought  
    Pervades it all while thou dost fondly gaze—  
Each subtile charm thy heart and brain have  
    caught,  
    And fixed indelibly for coming days.

Not for this hour alone thy soul inspire  
    With draughts of joy from each dear, perfect  
    spot ;

Months hence thou'lt quench the thirst of thy  
desire

With memories of beauty unforgot.

Feast thou thy vision, then, each passing day  
On every changing view of lake and shore!  
For this indeed is Nature's lavish way.

All thou dost see is thine forever more,

In spite of blindness, sorrow, sin or pain;  
E'en though delusions come with dimming haze,  
Some glimpse of all this glory will remain  
To sweeten life for thee in coming days.



IF THOU CANST TELL ME SOMETHING KIND.

If thou canst tell me something kind  
That has been thought of me,  
If thou canst lift my spirit up  
To moods of buoyancy,  
Then speak the words, I pray thee, dear,  
However light they seem ;  
Withhold not from me anything  
That adds to life's sweet dream.

If thou canst tell me of some one  
Whom I have chanced to aid,  
If thou canst point to me some spot  
That I have brighter made,  
Then softly whisper unto me  
In accents fond and low,  
The kind truth never hurts nor harms,  
But sets the heart aglow.

So come with light, and warmth, and cheer,

To meet me every day;

Reflect to me the world's bright smiles,

And hide its frowns away.

Oh, hast thou sorrows of thine own?

Have others injured thee?

Unburden as thou wilt, I'll lend

My tender sympathy.

But if some cruel, heedless tongue

Has uttered words of hate,

With justice or injustice cursed

My errors, hesitate

Before thou tell'st me what will bring

But shadows in my life.

God knows we all have need of love

To calm our secret strife.

If thou canst tell me something kind

That has been thought or spoken;

If thou canst lift a spirit, sad,

By treachery oft broken,—

Repeat it, dear; my faith inspire,

However vain it seem.

For I would fain be trustful still,

Nor wake from life's sweet dream.

## O YE BEAUTEOUS HILLS OF FRANKFORT!

O ye happy hills of Frankfort!

Wist ye why to-day we sigh?

Gentle hills that sit and listen

To the tender, leaning sky;

Shadowed hills, enlaced with sunshine,

Mist-embosomed, silence-clad,

Do ye feel our yearning homage,

Know why we no more are glad?

'Tis because, amid your forests,

In the hush of "Arnold's wold,"

Walks a bard who speaks your language;

One to whom ye oft have told

Secrets of transcendent sadness,

Which so freely forth he breathes

That he low rebukes our rapture,

And to us your sigh bequeaths.

Oh wild-tangled wold, soul wooing,  
    Stretched in smiling, careless grace  
'Neath the arch of clouds far distant,  
    But for *him* upon your face

We could only read a story  
    Fraught with radiant joy's deep thrills;  
But he lives, and he your voice is,  
    Your own voice, ye once-mute hills!

Griefs vicarious does he suffer,  
    Till your strength is the world's gain;  
Happy hills? Nay, mounts transfigured  
    By the Poet's steadfast pain.

## GOUNOD'S SPRING SONG.

(ENCORE.)

Sing me the song once more!

The song of spring, that cheers us o'er and o'er;  
The song of Hope that breathes of brighter days,  
In my far home, when birds shall northward soar,  
To bless my loved ones there with gladsome lays.

Sing me the song once more.

Trill the ecstatic song!

Thy lips do like the lark its strains prolong,  
Thy voice alone can its full meaning bear,  
Thy swelling, soulful, happy, circling throng  
Of liquid notes that flow into the air.

Trill the ecstatic song!

Gounod, thy breath awaits!

Without thy magic whisper he creates  
No sounds divine, no subtile harmonies.

But silent keeps until thou op'st the gates  
Of spring, then speaks responsive to my sighs.

Gounod, thy breath awaits!

Oh, sing it all again!

It soothes my weary senses; lulls my pain.

Thy smiles inspire; thy buoyant melodies

Uplift my soul, and I no more complain.

Though I were in despair, they'd bid me rise,—

Oh, sing it all again!

A spring song forever!

So passion, hope, and promise never

Shall leave my heart, but through life's listful night,

Though storms of pain may come, they cannot  
sever

The echoing tones from my rapt soul's delight.

A spring song forever!

## TO A SOUTHERN LYRIST.

I swear by the yellow cnrysanthemum,  
And the red rose thou didst send me,  
That thou nevermore shouldst be sad and dumb  
Had I the art to befriend thee.

I'd Poesy woo with beckoning smile  
To love and ever attend me;  
All joy that she breathed as we strayed erstwhile  
I would gladly, freely lend thee.

I'd sources learn of thy musical verse  
From the goddess gay in keeping;  
Soft hie to thy side; rich measures rehearse,  
Whenever I caught her sleeping.

I would borrow from her the sunbeams stored  
For other bards to enkindle;  
Sweet fancies steal from her frolicsome horde,  
And strands of song from her spindle.



I'd win all her secrets of lyric art,  
And speed to thee to betray them,  
Should others list at the door of my heart,—  
Ruthless and loyal, I'd slay them!

Swear thou by the yellow chrysanthemum,  
And the red rose thou didst send me,  
That thou nevermore wilt be sad and dumb  
If I can ever befriend thee!

## AT OCEAN SPRINGS.

In the South to-day, where the red-bird's lay  
    Floats down from the cedar trees,  
And magnolias toss the clinging moss  
    To the warm and wooing breeze;  
'Neath the feathery pines, 'mid tangled vines;  
    Where the peach its pink bloom sheds;  
Where rich are the yields of the cotton-fields;  
    And the grand live-oak outspreads;  
Where the skies are blue all the long year through,  
    And the months seem an endless June,  
And from dawn till dark the fisherman's barque  
    Dots the bayou and still lagoon;  
Where the breath of the sea sweeps saltily  
    Across the sands to the hills,  
And rising meets the resinous sweets  
    And Hygeia their air distills;

Oh, there are nooks that Winter o'erlooks  
And there shall my home nest be.  
Blithe birdlings of Love, in my treasure-trove  
No frosts shall ever fright thee.  
Sweet Peace shall stay with me alway;  
She singeth in undertone,—  
“I've found you at last! All your pain is past,  
For this is my slumber-zone.”  
So at Ocean Springs, where the mockbird sings  
On the Mississippi shore,  
In a quiet spot, by winter forgot  
I'll hide till his reign is o'er.

IN A LIBRARY.

Silent companions of this leisure hour,  
Scribes of the spirit, let me own your power!  
There are no griefs that pain; no cares that fret,  
But in your presence dear, I can forget.  
To you I turn, knowing that I shall find  
Warmth for my heart and solace for my mind.  
What tender frankness is in all your looks,  
As thus I question you, O gentle books!

Can you teach all the lessons you have learned?  
Whisper of hidden wrongs you have discerned?  
Make all your truth transparent to my view?  
Give me your very soul, as 'twere my due?

Ah, sweet the answer which your smiles reveal,  
You *could* not, if you *would*, your thoughts conceal!

LINES, ON BEGINNING A STUDY OF  
ROBERT BROWNING.

Ah, who can mourn at vanished youth  
While verdant meads of dewy truth  
Unroll each day before the eyes,  
Keeping alive that glad surprise  
Which old age misses all the while  
When wisdom ceases to beguile?  
The "Unending Genesis" of things  
We view at every step; the springs  
Of youth eternal sparkling lie  
O'er all these meads. Blest infancy  
Of spirit-sense! On one small page  
Shine tropic truths so rare that age  
Under their fragrant incense keeps  
The blissful wonderment that steeps  
The baby mind in sweet content!  
O books divine! God-eloquent!  
Into my fading life you bring  
Continued thought, eternal spring.  
And never, while I drink your wine,  
Can old age touch this soul of mine,

## A WOMAN'S LOVE.

Asleep, awake; alone, in crowds; where e'er I be,  
In thought, in word, in deed, I will be true to thee.  
Thy mate I'd be in chains, though law might set  
me free.

In chains? Yes, fettered fast beyond escape for  
aye, [stay.  
So, loved and loving, thou, mine own, beside me  
Content with thee I'd live, and for thee cheerful die.  
Too abject in my homage, sayest thou, beloved?  
I am a woman—not the first—with feelings moved  
To depths irrational. Unsafe such depths have  
proved:

But I trust all to thee, and find in trust my heaven;  
To doubt thee, e'en in dreams, would be crime un-  
forgiven

By self, pardoned by God, but poisoning love's  
leaven.

No sacrifice too great! Sing on, ye poet, sing  
Of woman's love, which doth complete surrender  
bring.

Say that Love was, and is, and ever shall be king.

## A COMPARISON.

Thou sayest thy clarinette has faults, my friend  
Soon as the words are said I see thee bend  
And touch caressingly the instrument,  
As if, mayhap, its imperfections lent  
To ownership a loyal, tender grace,  
Which rests upon thy self-reproachful face.  
I can but plead that thus compassionate  
Thou'lt be with one who loves thee, but whose  
fate

It is to know and feel the bitter pain  
Of disappointing thee; for she would fain  
Respond to every smile or sigh of thine;  
Be silent when thou wishest; only shine  
In social sphere when winsome yielding ways  
Bring thee, her guide and god, inspiring praise  
For homage so devout, sincere. To thee  
She doth adapt her every mood, as sea

To changeful wind. Her spirits fall and rise  
Under thy censuring or approving eyes.  
Thy breath, melodious, full soon will warm  
To superhuman song the lifeless form  
Of clarion keys. Ah, latent forces dwell  
In fond hearts, too ! What magic spell  
Of ceaseless harmony thou might'st create  
By being less exacting with thy mate!



## ROCK OF HOPE.

Inquirer, be thou careful lest  
In thy desire for stronger test  
Of immortality, thou fall  
Upon some fearful chemical,  
Which, when thou thinkest not, shall turn  
Thy hopes to fears, or slowly burn  
Thy heart's old faith until remain  
But skeptic doubt. Oh, do not stain  
With sneers the mantle of thy youth,  
But keep it white with trust in truth  
Thou canst not prove; with caution wise,  
Approach thy being's mysteries.  
Be free to speak, be free to think,  
But ever see the atheist's brink  
On which with dread the human soul  
Stands poised. Oh, lose not thy control  
Of powers divine, but scan the sky's  
Remotest bound; lift thou thine eyes

As high as heaven, and gaze afar;  
With eager spirit search the star,  
So thou dost constant keep in mind  
The law of gravity. The wind  
Of sudden doubt may harshly blow  
And plunge thee into depths below  
Of unbelief, from which in vain  
Thou'lt try to grasp thy faith again,  
But never canst thou thus be moved  
If, on the Rock of Hope, ungrooved,  
By time's great floods, thou'lt fix thy feet,  
The storms of life may rudely beat  
About thy soul. Thou canst endure  
If on this Rock thou'lt stand secure.

## REVISION.

Seeking perfection, heaven's skies  
Pursuant change from deepest dyes  
To softest tints. The sunshine tries  
In vain to fadeless stay: it vies  
With fleeting splendors that arise  
In rainbow arch. Ah, subtleties  
Of Nature's laws! Do we despise  
Her works, replete with mysteries,  
Because she nothing fixed descries?

Seeking perfection, the soul's skies  
Pursuant change from deepest dyes  
Of faith to reason pale. Man tries  
In vain to changeless stay. Faith vies  
With passing facts that bright arise  
In science realms. Ah, subtleties  
Of man's clear brain! Shall he despise  
His tendency to oft revise

His loves, his hates, his party ties,  
The creeds that once were deemed so wise?

Matched in eternal sympathies  
Are changing moods of souls and skies.

There is no loss! Nature is wise.  
The dawn displays the sunset dyes.

There is no loss! God's truth ne'er dies.  
Time all revision sanctifies.

## DEFEAT.

I know thee not! Alas for those  
To whom thou canst thy form disclose.  
Oft I discern fiend-shapes afar  
In dim outlines, but lo! a star  
Shines also from black space; a friend  
Disguised as foe, fierce storm-clouds send.  
My will hath taught me how to gain  
Profit from loss, pleasure from pain.  
Will is supreme! Grim spectres rise  
No more when I have missed a prize.  
I fear no foes but those within,  
My soul dreads no defeat but sin.

And what sin is I can decide  
For self alone—*I am my guide.*  
Success in self at any cost,  
Attain I that and nought is lost.

## THE VALUE OF GIFTS.

I have learned to prize love, not for love's happiness,

But because when it comes my own glad heart to  
bless

With its sweet, subtile perfume, its tropical heat,  
I am stronger life's labors and duties to meet.

Withhold from me love and I care not to live—

For when 'tis denied me I have less to give

To the lonely and loveless. So all gifts I prize  
As they broaden and deepen my soul's sympathies.

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## JOY.

I have learned to love joy, not for joy's sake alone,  
But because of the sorrows its contrasts have  
shown.

Wherever the sunlight falls brightest, the shade  
Slants longest and farthest. Oh, I am afraid  
To love joy for joy's sake!—and I only will ask  
In its rapture and radiance and glory to bask,  
Until my soul glows with such warm sympathy  
That some who are joyless may joy find in me.

## MY MITHER'S WEE BIT PLAID.

Gie me the wee bit plaid she used to throw  
Across her shapely shoulders, thus! and so!  
Ye ken the wa'? Sa sure fu' fifty years  
O' my ain life, as I look back, appears  
The square 'o finest wool, which mither wore  
Or wrapped her bairns in, in sweet days o' yore.  
She had it on the night my daddie died.  
And at the door, to meet my bonnie bride,  
She stood wi' it on. If it could speak at all,  
Muckle 'twould tell,—my mither's auld plaid shawl.  
I dinna want her brooches nor her rings;  
Nor dainty caps, the saft an' filmy things  
That lent sic witchin' charms an' quaintsome grace  
To hier bent head an' couthrie, aged face.  
I dinna wish to keep the brocades rare,  
That queens once enviously saw her wear;  
Nor yet the wondrous scarf my uncle brought  
From foreign lands, wi' 'broidered palm-leaves  
wrought.  
Nay, lassie, ye may ha'e her trinkets all.  
I'll fold awa' my mither's auld plaid shawl.

## BEGONE, SUSPENSE!

Thou wretched, haggard, tottering dame!  
Exile from Hades! without name  
Save such as in thy changeful moods  
Thou givest thyself; thy form obtrudes  
Its ugly shape into the mind,  
And lingers there with looks unkind  
When men dare dream of being blest  
With hope; that less exacting guest  
Of whom thou jealous art when near,  
Thou seest her timidly appear.  
Begone, Suspense, from hearts that ache  
With dim forebodings! Better break  
And under Certainty once cry  
Than meet thy cruel, treacherous eye  
Which nothing tells, yet doth suggest  
Ills that elude the keenest quest.  
Begone forever, evil hag!  
When thou hast fled no more will lag  
Life's weary hours; with swifter pace  
Time's feet will run their destined race.



## HOPE AND FAITH.

Oh, build thou not a fence of dire distrust  
Around thy life by stern, unchanging creeds.  
Make but a simple hedge of hope and faith,  
And fill the space with worthy, Christ-like deeds.

Let thy hope blossom in the early spring,  
And still bloom on when summer days depart;  
And when cold winter brings its wild, fierce storms,  
Thy faith keep warmth and freshness in thy heart.

Let thy whole life be luminous as day.  
For it will last while sun and systems roll;  
Through countless ages on thy unknown course  
A loving God will guide thy deathless soul.

So build thou not a wall of doubt and fear  
Around thy heart by stern, unchanging creeds;  
Make but a simple hedge of hope and faith,  
And fill the space with noble, Christ-like deeds.

I DREAMED THAT YOU LOVED ME.

I dreamed that you loved me; I dreamed that you  
knelt

And drew down my lips to your own;  
And 'round my bent form your fond arms I felt  
As you told me, in reverent tone,  
How blest you would be if I'd grant your request  
And become your true wife. Oh, 'twas bliss  
To feel your head pillowed at last on my breast,  
And to press on your forehead my kiss.

But alas, it was only a dream!

'Twas only a dream, alas!

And here I sit sobbing,

My heart is still throbbing,

'Twas only a dream, alas!

I dreamed that you loved me; I dreamed that you  
spake

Of perfections so high and so rare,  
That I gazed in your eyes to see if awake  
You could be and yet deem me so fair.

They smiled into mine. Oh, I cannot forget  
The spell of thy silent control;  
We plighted our troth; I can feel thy kiss yet,  
And the rapture that flooded my soul.

But alas, it was only a dream!

'Twas only a dream, alas!

And here I sit sobbing,

My heart is still throbbing,

'Twas only a dream, alas!

## IMMORTAL.

Banish all random thoughts that are not white;  
Let dreams and fancies be so chastely pure,  
That, leaving the mind's shade, they can endure  
The test of instantaneous, clear light.

Mend thou thy broken speech, and make it whole;  
Let thy words be so worthy that if death  
Come suddenly, shall be thy latest breath  
A benediction to some passing soul.

Before thy task is finished thou may'st tire;  
Let thy plans be so noble and so high  
That deeds undone shall be thy legacy  
To toilers whom thy life has helped inspire.

Hold cheerful views! Rest ever in content!  
But think, speak, act, and live as if to die.  
Let all that's false or purposeless go by.  
Immortal thou in life's accomplishment.

## OPTIMISM.

Earth still is blest, though cursed by sin;  
All men may yet a saintship win.

Depravities, though men may strive,  
For some wise end are kept alive.

Earth would be heaven and every man  
A Christ, were this God's perfect plan.

So let the world be worldly still,  
And find some good in every ill.

## EXCUSE.

As natural 'tis for some to sneer  
As 'tis for nitre to taste salt.  
Through every season of the year  
They frown; and must we chide as fault  
The cynic-savors that pervade  
Their speech? Our tender hearts are torn  
By irony. When most dismayed  
At skeptic scowls, the brine of scorn  
Doth threaten soon to overspread  
Our spirits too. But ever while  
The look of peace upon our dead  
Mocks hopeless grief, and the slow smile  
Of spring rebukes our restless haste,  
In Law beneficent we trust.  
All serve its ends. There is no waste  
In nature. The despisèd dust  
Is sacred though it dims the green;  
The smallest pool reflects the sky;

So let us find for human mien  
Excuses just. He who is high,  
And sane, and sweet, is so by force  
Of nature and of circumstance.  
The low, the bitter, and the coarse  
Are the sad sport of fateful chance  
Pardon while yet condoling sin.  
Be mild without, severe within.

## IN MINIATURE.

Soft golden sunshine flooded all the place.  
A calla lily in an antique vase  
Bent down and murmured to a maiden pure,  
“Behold me, sweet, thyself in miniature.”  
As the white flower in stately, proud repose  
From iridescent crystal calmly rose,  
So did her graceful, white-robed figure lean  
From couch of blue 'mid yellow light serene.  
The sunshine fled at last; the maiden slept;  
The lily in the dark its vigil kept.

One morn the room with subtle scent was filled;  
A pink rose in the lily's place distilled  
Fragrance most rare; the blushing maid did seem  
In true accord with Nature's laws supreme.  
For, spoke the rose, as had the lily pure,  
“Behold me, sweet, thyself in miniature.”  
She wak'ning saw in one effulgent hour  
The deeper hue of passion's holy flower.  
Each transport of love's rapturous delight  
The same speech from some blossom doth invite.  
Whisper to day carnations, glowing pure,  
“Behold me, sweet, thyself in miniature.”



## THE INVISIBLE SINGER.

Such power lieth in Hope's soulful voice  
That listeners, sorrow-burdened, quick rejoice.  
Long have I followed her from place to place  
Hearing her sing, but seeing not her face.  
There seems some strange yet blest fatuity  
In my fond chase of this sweet fantasy.

Presence ideal! Reverently glad  
In her great gift I never-more am sad.  
The sentient thought, "Ah, deep within, I hear  
Those notes of heaven, resonant and clear,"  
Give life such blithesomeness and buoyancy  
That I her face no more desire to see,  
Lest, hearing tones divinely pure, I prize  
Them lightly, thrilled by her prophetic eyes.  
Enough to list, and know what 'tis to be  
Inspired and strengthened by her minstrelsy.

## PAIN.

Pain is a strong and steadfast friend,  
On whom I've learned to lean ;  
He decks me oft with thorny wreaths,  
Calls me his gracious queen.

I've met him in his sternest mood  
And gazed in fearless guise  
With trust unflinching, undisturbed,  
Into his flashing eyes.

His lion-heart brooks no rebuff  
In its intensity ;  
I do not frown on my friend Pain,  
Nor deem him enemy.

And thus he's grown to love me well ;  
Calls me his peerless queen ;  
Clothes me in robes of varied griefs  
That suit my royal mien.

I know alas, the hour will come  
    When Pain will find me weak ;  
In his strong arms I'll helpless lie,  
    His breath will blanch my cheek.

His voice e'en now calls unto me  
    To cease this secret strife.  
With one who is all powerful  
    To take a weary life.

Yet still I struggle and forgive,  
    Though hard is his control.  
This friend, who steals my body's strength,  
    At last will free my soul.

## PARADOXICAL.

I've been living and dying for thousands of years.  
I know everything—nothing, my hopes are all fears,  
And my fears are all hopes; that which saddens me  
    cheers.

Oh, my tears are all smiles, and my smiles are all  
    tears.

For so slowly do all things resolve into one,  
That ere I can say it this moment is done.  
'Tis melted as snow-flakes melt under the sun  
As the past is the present, the present is past,  
As the last is the first, so the first is the last.  
Time is nothing compared with eternity vast.

All gain is loss, and all loss is gain.  
All love is joy, but all joy brings pain.  
Nothing is old and nothing is new,  
Nothing is false, and nothing quite true.  
Birth and death differ merely in view.  
Dreams are not dreams I oft realize  
While I am dreaming. He who is wise  
Proves he's asleep when dreaming denies!

## INHERITED MEMORIES.

“Why is it,” she asked, “that the distant sky,  
And the purple mist, and those hills so high,  
Seem to me a part of a day gone by?  
I’ve been here before! Yes, ages ago  
I saw this scene in the sun’s golden glow.  
Since then I’ve died—and slept under the snow.  
Not I, but ancestors, distant you know.

Self is a fraction. This I that you see  
Is a mere leaf from the family tree.

\* \* \* \* \*

“What beautiful clouds! Long centuries since  
Together we sat here watching their tints.  
Just this same morning in memory glints.”

\* \* \* \* \*

“But let us go, dear, and no longer gaze,  
Or dim remembrances my mind will daze.

Oh, when—where—how—why? The problem still  
stays;

We turned there—paused here—familiar all ways.”

Are these gleams of recognition  
Due to some occult condition  
Of soul and sense, some subtle law  
By means of which far forces draw  
From root to branch in human tree  
The sap of kinship flowing free?

Like mock-bird, with a fettered wing  
To the past our spirits cling;  
Ever as new strains they sing,  
Dreams of some familiar thing  
O'er the soul their shadows fling.

## THE BOAT THAT HOLDS BUT TWO.

We three were out a-rowing.  
The fitful breeze was blowing;  
Fatigued was Tom, our oarsman,  
And flushed his features fair;  
Sue helped the stalwart fellow,  
And brown eyes, soft and mellow,  
Oft sought responsive blue ones—  
As if I were not there.

They shoulder sat to shoulder;  
He grew a little bolder,  
And she quite forgot my presence,  
For she let him hold her hand;  
And he whispered something to her—  
Could it be Tom was *her* wooer?  
Embarrassed by the tableau,  
I looked towards the land.

“Let us go,” he said, “to-morrow ;  
This boat I will not borrow,  
But a lighter one, my dearest,  
And we’ll take an early start.”  
Oh, I tried hard not to listen,  
Nor to let the hot tears glisten—  
One moment on my eye-lids—  
Could they hear my throbbing heart?

’Midst plans for pleasure-seeking—  
I found myself out speaking,  
As if in purest mischief,—  
“Oh, how I envy you !  
To-morrow you’ll row over  
To beckoning shores of clover,  
And land among the lilies—  
Does the boat hold only two ?”

“Only two,” he quickly grumbled ;  
I was piqued and hurt and humbled,  
Though I laughed as if ’twere nothing  
But a charming joke to me.



Next day I sat a-sighing,  
In distance dim descrying  
Tom's big hat and Sue's red jacket  
And—oho, the boat held three!

For just as they were going  
To start out on their rowing,—  
He prophetically silent,  
She humming a love-song,—  
Her cousin and her brother,  
Her uncle and her mother,  
All thought there must be room  
For one more to go along.

They were slow in their deciding,  
Heeding not Sue's gentle chiding;  
Her mother wanted pickerel,  
And could scarcely bear to wait;  
So her uncle, who was skillful,  
And fidgety and willful,  
Not only kept Tom rowing,  
But made him get the bait.

Tom owned to me this morning,  
That it served as timely warning,—  
“Though I hated her relations,  
I had meant to marry Sue.  
But *you* are so sweet and tender—  
And you know my purse is slender—  
So I choose you, dear, more wisely  
For your relatives are few.”  
“On this matter of life-rowing,”  
Said I, “mankind is knowing ;  
But, dear Tom, I can’t go with you  
In this ‘boat that holds but two.’  
I have just received a letter,  
And my great-aunt, who was better,  
Has died and left me millions,  
If I’ll row my own canoe.”

## VALHALLA.

### A NORSE SONG.

Away, away to Valhalla!  
The banquet hall of the sky,—  
Where the cloud-gods stay all the livelong day,  
And feast in revelry.  
They drink of the dawn's elixir,  
But its glow departs too soon;  
And they silent sit in an infinite  
Repose, till the afternoon  
Across the horizon steals,  
And they rise refreshed and free,  
Ready to quaff with songs and laugh  
The vapors of land and sea.  
And they sip the wines of the sunset,—  
Sweet wines of a thousand dyes,  
And they never know care, nor sin's despair.  
Oh, let us away to the skies,  
Away, away to Valhalla,  
The banquet hall divine,  
Where, above the earth and its mimic mirth,  
The gods drink Odin's wine.

## WITHIN THY DESK.

Within thy cabinet I hid

A souvenir.

In silence pause: lift soft the lid;

Surprised peer!

Lo, thou wilt find it snugly lying

In whate'er nook,

'Mongst secret springs, so rev'rent prying,

Thine eye doth look.

How coyly didst thou beckon me—

'Twas months ago.

With eager steps I followed thee,

Eager to know

What treasure, new found, quaint, grotesque,

Thoudst captured safe.

Time's vagrant proved to be thy desk—

Historic waif!

Thou wast, in satin gown and lace,  
The daintiest dame;  
With coiffure high and beaming face,  
And cheeks aflame;  
With glances dropping proudly down,  
How picturesque!  
Pointing to prize from Moorish town  
In Arabesque.

The spell was sweet. No lifeless thing  
Ensnares my mind.  
As flower in bloom, or bird on wing,  
Or voice all-kind.  
I could not praise thy gems of art,  
So winsome thou!  
With gracious mien, and generous heart  
And gentle brow.

As thou the key didst turn that day,  
Smiling on me;  
A tender thought, locked safe away,  
I left for thee.

'Mongst all the relics thou mayst seek,  
Sometimes compare  
My simple gift, though not antique,  
With treasures rare.

Methinks thou'lt find few offerings  
More chaste, sincere;  
Keep 'neath thy desk's most sacred springs  
My souvenir.

Forever let it there be hid—  
The thought most sweet,  
And always when thou lift'st the lid  
Thy soul 'twill greet.

## FORGIVENESS.

Forgiveness is the fragrance rare and sweet,  
That flowers yield when trampled on by feet  
That reckless tread the tender, teeming earth  
For blossoms crushed and bleeding, yet give birth  
To pardon's perfume. From the stern decrees  
Of unforgiveness Nature ever flees.

## MUTE.

As side by side we stood, afar  
We saw the falling of a star.  
“Thus silently,” thou saidst to me,  
“Let love depart. It cannot be!  
But as the heavens show no sign  
Of meteor lost, this hour divine,  
With passion pure, must stand  
Forever sacred.” Thy command  
I do obey. We, too, alone  
Will take into the vast unknown  
The mem’ry of that wondrous light  
Which flashed, and fled for aye. In night  
Of Silence, starless, stanch and deep,  
Mutely I sit and think and weep.



## THE FREEDOM LOVE DOTH CRAVE.

Freedom to be thy faithful, self-appointed slave ;  
Thine, only thine, until I reach my grave,  
Canst thou believe that I this freedom crave ?  
I'd deem that day divine that made my loss thy  
gain ;  
I'd find my highest joy in sacrificial pain ;  
I'd keep my love for thee without a single stain  
Of doubt, or scar of selfishness ; I'd ever stand  
Like Iris, the swift-winged, awaiting thy command ;  
Or follow thee in silence over sea and land.

## STARWARD.

Starward gazing through thy tears,  
Thou didst wander weary years  
On the road thy infant feet  
Had found thornless, safe and sweet.  
All the while, though steps were light,  
Thy poor spirit chafed. A blight  
Fell upon thy mind; thy will  
Grew so weak thou couldst fulfill  
With faint heart the duties meet  
Lying at thy snow-white feet.  
Tempted too, yet onward toiling,  
Never once thy white feet soiling.

But a change there came at length,  
Love o'ertook thee in his strength,  
While both lithe and pure and fleet  
Were thy supple, dainty feet,

Swiftly changed thy inmost thought.  
Thou to face new laws wast brought.  
Thou hadst strayed erstwhile as far  
As thou couldest toward thy star.  
Doubtful of the world's stern codes.  
Loitered thou near devious roads.  
"No fixed star my steps shall guide,"  
Thou didst cry in anguished pride.

"Blest, not cursed, I'll be with love;  
Starless, pathless will I rove  
Wheresoe'er love leads my feet;  
Freedom shall make life complete.  
God was thwarted, 'twas not I,  
When, compelled new ways to try,  
I, avoiding walls and hedges  
Heedless, reckless, scorning pledges,  
Walked forth fearless, true, and fleet,  
Wondering at God's defeat!  
Love's own laws I now obey."  
"List," says one, "she's gone astray."

Gone astray? Forever lost?  
Nay, thy Christ doth thee accost.  
Weary, wayward child, my blame  
Lightly falls. The night of shame  
Has its star which shines for thee,  
Guide through all eternity.  
Thy frail will no more shall sway.  
Thy sad soul shall find its way  
Down the ages, till thy feet  
Stand before God's judgment-seat.  
Freedom is unknown to thee;  
Death alone can set thee free.  
But not 'neath the waves a close  
Seek for thy heart's hopeless woes.  
Starward gaze thou through thy tears;  
Bear the burden of thy years;  
Fill thy days with toil and prayer;  
Save some soul thy soul's despair.

## SOUVENIR.

Unfailing friend, thy gift I prize  
Above all treasures. Ah, wouldst know  
What 'tis I own? The after-glow  
Of those rare hours, when thy loved eyes  
Met mine in perfect faith and trust  
Has lingered all these skeptic days,  
Has outworn keepsakes dear, and stays  
The one memento that the rust  
Of time and change has not made dim.  
When I would yield to tragic grief  
At scoffs and sneers, thy gift, *belief*,  
Supports my soul, and spectres grim  
Of worldly censure disappear  
At thought of eyes that read me true,  
And spoke thy trust from depths of blue,—  
What loss to lose this souvenir!

LO! I'VE SEEN AN EAGLE'S NEST.

Lo! I've seen an eagle's nest;  
Looked down from the lofty crest  
Of a mountain, at whose base  
Rollicked with rock-broken pace,  
Splashing half its life away  
'Gainst the towering cañons gay,  
All to rest and peace unknown—  
The rushing, rippling Yellowstone.

Like my Soul's its thwarted quest,  
Till I saw an eagle's nest.

Lo! I've seen an eagle's brood;  
Felt the spell of Sibyl's mood;  
Gazed with deepening ardor down  
Through cliff-spaces, golden brown,  
White as chalk and red as blood,  
Toward the Yellowstone's swift flood.  
'Mid the murmurings of the falls,  
List! my ear caught birdlings' calls,  
Like my Soul's, unsatisfied,  
Till the eagle's nest I spied.

Lo! I've seen an eagle's home;  
Let my glance enraptured roam  
To the radiant sunset sky;  
And below, where walls outvie  
Haughtiest hues, and each ravine  
Palette seems of the Unseen.  
Hail, All-Artist's regal throne:—  
Cañons of the Yellowstone.

Hail, thou Pisgah of the west,  
Where I saw the eagle's nest.

Freedom's eyrie, proudly found!  
Foes may threaten and surround.  
Sin and sorrow, pain, despair,  
Seek my spirit's lowly lair,  
Still one moment, most sublime,  
Will outwing my earth-bound time.  
Freedom's birdlings pinioned there,  
Mimicked my defeat and care.

Lo, my soul says, "Victor;—rest."  
I have seen the eagle's nest.

## I HAVE COME TO GO.

“I have come to stay,” sang the robin  
From the budding maple tree,  
But to-day on barren branches  
Her deserted home I see.

I muse on the warm, sweet southland  
To which the robin fled,  
When the northern breezes chilled her,  
And I think of my wiser dead,  
As having followed some instinct  
Of the soul for a safer home;  
And such trust as a bird or a bride has  
Is mine wherever I roam.

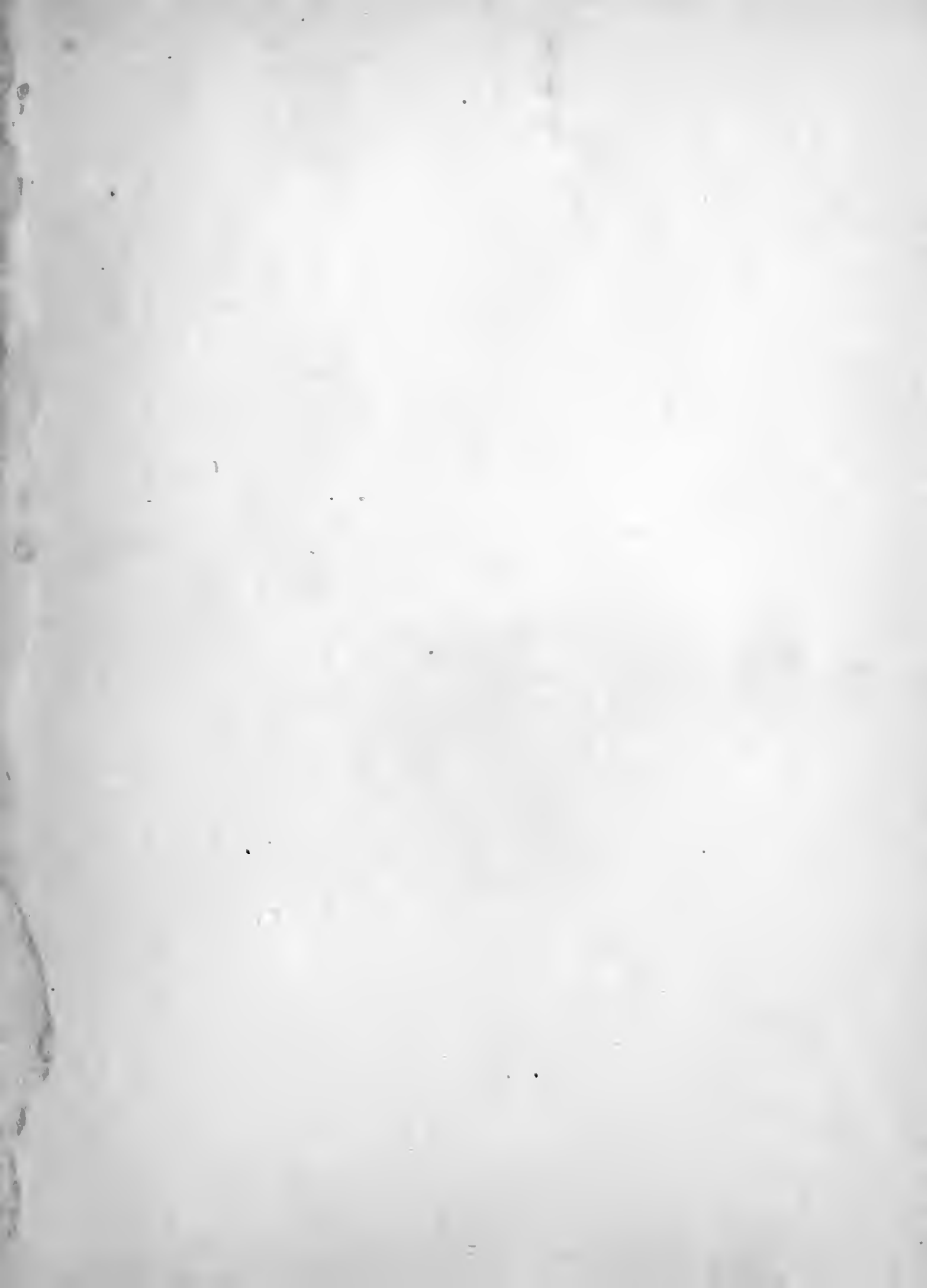
My home will tenantless be,  
I shall seek some far-off clime,  
A stranger will come for me,  
I'll go forth with my Love sometime.



The bird and the bride are gladsome  
In the thought "I have come to stay,"  
But I cannot rest till my dear Love  
Has borne me forever away  
From the fickle winds of earth,  
From the friendships that ebb and flow;  
From the passion and pain of life,  
Thank God, I have come to go!

My faith in eternal shelter  
Grows stronger each fitful day,  
To some unknown, sunny southland,  
My soul will find its way.









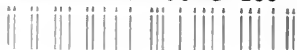
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